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CAUSE NO. 3:22cv734-DPJ-HSO-LHS
WITNESS _____
CLERK: SHONE POWELL

FEB 26 2024

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
Condice Crane, REPORTER

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

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**TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO-RECORDED
PUBLIC HEARING OF THE
STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
AUGUST 5, 2021**

MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 2

1 MR. BECKETT: Well, thank you all for coming out
2 tonight. This is, uh, the first of our public hearings
3 that we're going to have on -- on redistricting and,
4 um, just -- just a little history, the joint committee
5 holds these public hearings to receive suggestions and
6 recommendations on how the Mississippi Legislature
7 should redistrict itself and its four Congressional
8 districts.

9 Uh, during the course of this -- this hearing,
10 uh, what's best of -- I mean, well all the members,
11 uh, are members of the public and will have the
12 opportunity to ask questions of the meeting, like
13 statements, um, to the meeting and about the upcoming
14 redistricting efforts.

15 By custom, we try to give members of the public a
16 pre-opportunity to say what they wish. Um, in cases
17 where it appears that there are going to be many
18 people who want to speak, um, we will have to limit
19 the time as -- as to what limits, uh, when posed, uh,
20 will be up to -- to my six chairmen, depending on how
21 many people want to speak.

22 And, uh -- and so that's kind of where we'll
23 start out. Uh, at this time, um, I will -- as
24 chairman, I'd like to call the -- the public hearing
25 for the Joint Reinforcement Committee and -- and Joint

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 3

1 Congressional Redistricting Committee to order and --
2 and ask, uh, Mr. Ted Booth to call roll.
3 MR. BOOTH: Yes, sir. Uh, from the House, Mr.
4 Beckett.
5 MR. BECKETT: Here.
6 MR. BOOTH: Blackmon, Brown, Eubanks, Ford --
7 MR. FORD: Here.
8 MR. BOOTH: -- Mangold.
9 MR. MANGOLD: Here.
10 MR. BOOTH: -- Read, Shanks --
11 MR. SHANKS: Here.
12 MR. BOOTH: -- Taylor and White. From the Senate,
13 Kirby --
14 MR. KIRBY: Here.
15 MR. BOOTH: -- Bryan --
16 MR. BRYAN: Here.
17 MR. BOOTH: -- DeBar, Harkins --
18 MR. HARKINS: Here.
19 MR. BOOTH: -- Hopson, Parker, Simmons, Tate --
20 MR. TATE: Here.
21 MR. BOOTH: -- Turner-Ford, Wiggins.
22 MR. BECKETT: All right. Thank you. And I just
23 want to -- for -- for clarification purposes, we do
24 not have to have a quorum. This is not -- not a -- a
25 meeting where we -- where we would have to do that.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 4

1 Uh, we set the [inaudible] for -- to document who
2 was present. Um, you know, I -- I -- I would like to,
3 uh -- Chair would like to -- to recognize any -- we
4 didn't have any members [inaudible], I don't think,
5 that were on the roll.

6 So we -- we'll dispense with that. Uh,
7 additionally, I would like to recognize, uh, any
8 legislatures -- legislators in the audience who are
9 not on the committee, if you would like to stand up
10 and introduce yourself, it would be fine if you do
11 that. [inaudible, laughter]

12 Sir, I know you're not going to miss the
13 opportunity to stand up. [laughter]

14 MALE 1: [inaudible] personal preference. Good
15 evening, everyone. I think I know most of the people
16 that are here from the residents around the area.
17 Thank you all for coming and thank you for your level
18 of participation [inaudible].

19 MR. BECKETT: All right. And [inaudible], I don't
20 think there's anybody else [inaudible]. All right.
21 [inaudible]. Um, [inaudible] is having this meeting
22 here and bringing community college in we --

23 I want to thank our folks for -- for the efforts
24 that they've gone to to, uh -- to make this available
25 to -- to the public and allowing us to use the

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 5

1 facility and [inaudible] that he does not [inaudible]
2 saying anything to you -- to you all at this time,
3 but, uh, if he changes his mind, we will give him an
4 opportunity to do that.

5 Um, and so, um, the, uh -- uh, at this time, I
6 would just ask any other member -- any members of the
7 committee if -- if, uh -- then we'll give them the
8 opportunity to say something here in a few minutes,
9 but I want to remind you -- and [inaudible] the staff
10 has asked me to remind you that we need each person to
11 sign in.

12 Um, I think there -- there [inaudible] sign in as
13 you came in, but if you have not signed in, we would
14 love to have a record available [inaudible] the
15 hearing. So be -- be sure to do -- and do that. Um,
16 you know -- and, um, a great deal of effort has gone
17 into these hearings. We're going to have a series of
18 nine hearings across the state. This happens to be the
19 first one that we've had.

20 I -- I understand that there have been hearings
21 [inaudible]. Um, I believe it's very -- probably the
22 first time this has been [inaudible]. We'll get a
23 little further along each time. And I want to thank
24 the staff, because they go back through the
25 transcripts of -- of the fire hearings, especially the

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 6

1 ones [inaudible] in 2010 and they looked at -- at
2 different things that we need to cover in a meeting,
3 those questions I asked [inaudible] that.

4 So we've -- I want to touch on a few things that
5 are just common -- uh, common things I've been asking
6 at all the hearings that -- that the public needs to
7 understand about this process that -- that we're
8 entering into. And so, uh, just a few of the -- few of
9 the issues, you know, why -- why do we redistrict?

10 I -- I -- I have people that -- that ask that
11 question. They -- they seem to be fundamental to us
12 and we may understand all that, but -- but we need --
13 but we require that, uh -- to redistrict and I need to
14 point out that the Federal House [inaudible] require
15 that one person -- 1 vote requires redistrict both the
16 Congressional districts and the Legislative districts
17 every 10 years following the census.

18 Additionally, Section 254 of our Constitution of
19 1890 requires that we redistrict the Legislative. So
20 we're not doing it because [inaudible] redistrict,
21 we're doing it because it's required that we would do
22 that. Uh, some people will ask, you know, when -- when
23 -- when would [inaudible] Wilkins [ph] commence
24 redistricting.

25 And so that's one thing I want to make clear that

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 7

1 officially, we are commencing redistricting denial. Uh
2 -- uh, at -- at this -- at this point -- at this point
3 and time, um, because of qualified deadlines next
4 year, our -- our efforts of Congressional
5 redistricting will come first and, uh -- and -- and
6 will occur during the -- during this fall.

7 Um, we will be working on -- on the Legislature
8 during -- during the months of 2022, uh, [inaudible]
9 session. Um, you know, why -- why would we need to
10 redistrict? Because the population [inaudible] will --
11 we're going to face challenges redistricting
12 [inaudible]. When you look at these maps, you --
13 you'll understand that our population has shifted a
14 lot with -- we have --

15 Most counties have gone down in population but
16 some have gone up right now and because of these one-
17 person, uh -- these -- these, uh -- these voting
18 requirements that we make [inaudible] -- we equalize
19 the districts. We're required to do this [inaudible]
20 makes it very difficult too. If you'll look at the
21 maps scattered around, um -- uh -- uh, that we bolted
22 here, you'll -- you'll see how the population's
23 changed.

24 The maps will show the 2020 census population
25 estimates for counties showing where the census bureau

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 8

1 projects gains and losses. Um, you know, there's --
2 there's going to be -- for this meeting -- I mean,
3 we're -- we're showing all of them, but for this
4 meeting, you all need to know that this portion of the
5 state lost population all -- in all of the counties in
6 this portion and the state lost [inaudible].

7 When -- when we go to [inaudible], but when we go
8 plus one and down four in [inaudible], we're going to
9 be -- have an [inaudible]. We're going to be dealing
10 with, uh, gains in population and both present
11 challenges. You know, the -- the exhibits, um, will
12 al- -- will also tell you the ideal size for a House
13 District is 24,273 people and that can be a -- a 5 --
14 5 to 7 deviation up and down.

15 The, uh -- the Senate ideal size is 56,948
16 allowing for the same type of deviation. So there is a
17 little room in the House and Senate Districts and
18 deviation. What you need to understand from the
19 Congressional districts, that is not the case and they
20 need to be as close to identical as possible.

21 Um, you know, why -- why are we presenting the
22 census estimates if the [inaudible] of the actual
23 data? It's because of the delays in reducing the
24 census data, the actual numbers, uh, we use in
25 redistricting are not yet available.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 9

1 So we don't have the actual numbers so that --
2 and first set of data will be available in mid-August
3 with a final official delivery occurring close to
4 September -- close to the end -- uh, close to the end
5 of September.

6 Census estimates give us a good indication of --
7 of where our challenges are and how to use the past
8 years to assist the public in understanding the issues
9 faced in redistricting. So I mean, there -- you can't
10 draw the districts, because we don't have the precinct
11 numbers, but you -- you know what parts to say you are
12 losing population.

13 And so your representation -- you're -- you're
14 representing, essentially by in large, areas that
15 they're representing on a [inaudible] and -- and where
16 the [inaudible] will be and, uh, you know, and how can
17 -- how can -- how many members of the public
18 participate in this process. So, you know, there's
19 several ways.

20 Um, about [inaudible] concerns of this meeting is
21 one way you can participate. We're -- we're here to
22 hear your concerns this evening, we will listen to --
23 to any matter that -- that you wish to bring to our
24 attention about how and where we will draw
25 Congressional and Legislative districts that, uh, we

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 10

1 need to let members of the public know that -- that
2 unless I have a card with their name on -- on --
3 Unless they're assigned a card with their name on
4 it, before we can make any call, uh, we -- we need to
5 know that for a couple reasons, one, so we know who
6 we're talking to, but also for any follow-ups. So
7 we'll need a -- we'll need a name. But, um, you know,
8 staff will be passing out the cards for anyone that --
9 that wants one.

10 Um, also, um, you can submit suggestions to the
11 committee in writing on my email and you can, uh -- by
12 taking advantage of the opportunity to see the
13 committee's public access and computer -- computer
14 terminals, our -- our, um -- our meeting denial is
15 going to be on the computer.

16 And so there is -- there is public access to
17 this. There are people who will be -- who will be
18 watching through that avenue and -- and you can -- the
19 other meetings might be too far away.

20 Uh, in a hearing, you know, what kinds of
21 concerns does committee need to hear from the public?
22 It is simply anything that is on your mind, um, is the
23 simple answer.

24 You know, in the past, we've heard things about
25 voting rights and some we've heard about flipped

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 11

1 precincts, we've heard about splitting the
2 municipalities, um, and, um, districts that are odd- -
3 - odd-shaped. And so we've -- we'll -- we're -- we --
4 we've heard most of the things that members have
5 talked about.

6 We talk about the same things that -- that -- a
7 lot of the same issues that talk -- talk about
8 denying, but, uh, just so you know the rules in the
9 house will govern joint committees.

10 Um, we -- we -- we -- we will han- -- we will
11 handle such matters as the House would handle it and
12 another issue is how can members of the public contact
13 the meeting to provide information or to book time of
14 the public access computers?

15 Uh, members of the public shall be advised to
16 send, by U.S. Mail, to Ted Booth, that's Ted right
17 there, uh, staff counsel, Joint Reinforcement
18 Committee, P.O. Box 1204, Jackson, Mississippi and,
19 uh, we'll be glad to provide this address [inaudible].

20 We've got -- got an email address, uh,
21 tedbooth@peer.ms.gov and, you know, we just -- we need
22 you to be -- to please provide information for staff
23 follow-ups such as email address, uh, telephone number
24 and if some of this still seems like we [inaudible]
25 need to go over it in here like the address and

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 12

1 things, just remember there are people who are going
2 to be watching that are here right now that might not
3 have [inaudible] to get an address from us afterwards.

4 But, uh -- but public access for Congressional
5 redistricting will -- will commence following the
6 delivery of the final PL94-171 data which should
7 arrive at the close of September. That -- that's what
8 you need -- need to know is that -- is don't worry
9 about the -- the number of the -- the information, but
10 we're going to receive the data -- the necessary data
11 end of September.

12 And so -- so that's when our Congressional time
13 will start and, um, the public access time will last
14 three weeks from the end of September. For
15 Legislative, it will occur after January 1, 2022 and
16 will last 3 weeks. Um, so at this time, I would like
17 to call any other member that might want to have
18 anything notable to add.

19 MALE 2: Quickly, if I may. Um, first, thank you
20 for having us here in Meridian -- [inaudible] Meridian
21 and also [inaudible] and you're [inaudible]. So -- and
22 the others that are here. So, um, let -- let me say
23 that we have some Senators and some House members that
24 aren't here as well as the census [inaudible] here
25 and, um, sent me a message saying, we're watching

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 13

1 online and wish they could be here.

2 Uh, we're here tonight, uh, as, uh, represent- --

3 uh, [inaudible], we're here to hear you [inaudible].

4 So, uh, I hope you can ask some new questions and we
5 look forward to [inaudible] each and every one of you.

6 MALE 3: Well, they aren't in my district, uh,
7 right here where we're sitting, but it's vacated right
8 now. So I will claim it for now. Um, so I just want to
9 say thank you to everybody for [inaudible]. Welcome to
10 Meridian, everybody. I look forward to hearing your
11 comments. Thank you.

12 MR. BECKETT: All right. We thank you all for
13 those comments. At -- at this time, we want to open
14 the meeting up for the public to, um, take a card, ask
15 -- ask -- ask a question and, uh, I'll make a co- --
16 we'll make a comment, because this is really, uh --
17 we're -- we're -- we're not going to have the answers
18 to all of your all's questions, but, uh, we are here,
19 at the very beginning segments of this redistricting
20 process, to get input from the communities around
21 [inaudible].

22 So [inaudible]. Um, while he's doing that, I want
23 to take just a moment, um, to remind our speakers that
24 -- that the committee, uh, may call a time if the
25 [inaudible] you all, uh, Joint Committee is operating,

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 14

1 once again, under the House rules regarding time for -
2 - for speaking on a measure. At the last round of
3 hearings, um, the time was limited to five minutes,
4 but, you know, we're -- we -- we'll just operate and,
5 uh, go forward. You have some questions for us?

6 MALE 4: I have a couple who would like to be
7 recognized. [inaudible] a few more minutes.

8 MR. BECKETT: All right. All right. All right.
9 The first individual is, uh, Mr. Greg Snowden. And
10 this one we may have to [inaudible].

11 [laughter]

12 MR. SNOWDEN: Well, that's -- you know, I -- I --
13 I'm used to that and I do apologize, I didn't expect
14 to be first. Uh, I do welcome you to [inaudible], you
15 [inaudible], most of you, uh, and, uh -- and I do
16 appreciate you being here and your interest, uh, in --
17 in East Mississippi. Um, I think what you said already
18 is of great importance to the folks here.

19 I don't think really it's understood that we have
20 lost quite a bit of population, uh, in this area and
21 not this [inaudible], but really the 12 counties
22 around. That's not unique. We had a -- a loss of
23 population in this area, uh, 10 years ago.

24 The [inaudible] were redistributed years ago and
25 actually, we did not lose a seat over here, uh,

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 15

1 primarily because of the creation of a new majority --
2 majority -- an [inaudible] majority district, uh,
3 [inaudible] in Kemper County and -- and, uh, I -- I
4 don't know if we can avoid that again this year.

5 We hope to do that and we want you to take a hard
6 look at that. We do think this area of the state
7 deserves, uh, representation, but other areas of the
8 state have grown. They're going to want, you know,
9 additional representatives and Senators as well. So we
10 would ask you to be careful here, um, for our area,
11 because that's -- that's very important.

12 Um, I -- I will say this, that, uh, 10 years ago
13 I was involved in a process, we -- we produced a
14 product that I think was, uh -- certainly was
15 acceptable to the Justice Department. Now, you do not
16 have a [inaudible] Department anymore, as you know,
17 uh, because the U.S. [inaudible] -- U.S. [inaudible],
18 but the civil rights law still applies.

19 Uh, you can't [inaudible] this. You can't
20 [inaudible]. You have to take minority and majority
21 districts [inaudible] districts, that's the law,
22 you've got to do that. Uh, state law, which does not
23 [inaudible], also states the things like compact
24 districts, contiguous districts, communities of
25 interest, uh, and -- and [inaudible].

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 16

1 I want to ask you to do two specific things for
2 this area of the state, I'm sure there are others, but
3 the two things that come to mind -- uh, and I will say
4 when I was first selected to the Legislature in 2000,
5 um, we had the local delegation of myself, a young
6 Republican representative [inaudible] of the House.

7 Uh, we had, uh, Chuck Young's father, uh, Charles
8 Young, Senior who, uh, was a Democrat and represented
9 Tommy Horne who is an independent. So we had a little
10 bit of everything and believe it or not we worked
11 together very well. I mean, Charles Young was a mentor
12 of mine, um, and it's helpful to have that kind of
13 representation where you can dip into both wells, so
14 to speak.

15 And I'm particularly concerned about the city of
16 Meridian. Um -- uh -- uh -- uh, we need to maintain,
17 um, a presence frankly of both parties in the city of
18 Meridian and that's something that I would ask you to
19 look at the priority here, because when these are
20 drawn, um -- uh, currently, District 83, which I --
21 and by the way, I have no intention of ever running
22 for anything again.

23 So, uh, it's not -- this is not partial, this is
24 a citizen [inaudible] in Meridian, but I was
25 [inaudible] represent District 83 20 years ago and,

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 17

1 um, it was remarkable how -- how we were able to work
2 together. If we needed a Democrat's help, we go to
3 Charles Young.

4 If we needed, uh, Republican help, sometimes they
5 would come to me and if we needed independent help, uh
6 -- well, if you needed most anything, you'd go to --
7 to Tom Horne and that continued under Chuck Young
8 who's doing an excellent job and I'm sure he works the
9 same way, uh, with our -- with our current delegation,
10 um, and I -- uh, that's important to -- to -- to have
11 that -- in my opinion, uh, to have that kind of
12 representation.

13 So I would ask you particularly -- not asking you
14 to maintain anything, because I understand how that
15 works, but particularly, uh, be conscious of that. I -
16 - I do think in the House, certainly those traditions
17 -- certainly, the truth is, uh, we need that as well,
18 that, uh -- with this, uh, Sampson Jackson current
19 representative of [inaudible], District 32 has got to
20 be maintained and it's got to have -- have an
21 influence and you all [inaudible] do that.

22 Second thing, for 30 years, I've been very close
23 to Clarke County. I've represented their board of
24 supervisors for years, town of Stonewall for years.
25 Until 10 years ago, Clarke County was divided in 5

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 18

1 different ways.

2 I mean, they just -- they was full of
3 [inaudible], uh, folks who live elsewhere and one of
4 the things I was proudest of in the 2- -- I guess it
5 was 2010, actually, when [inaudible] redistricting,
6 was that we were able to put Clarke County pretty much
7 together, again, as far as House representation and,
8 uh, representative Troy Smith now represents that
9 area.

10 He was represented by [inaudible] prior to that
11 and represented [inaudible] County prior to that, but
12 it -- it's contiguous and it represents most of Clarke
13 County. I would just urge you -- and I know Senator
14 Tate has a very strong [inaudible], because he
15 represents Clarke County, most of it. Uh, I guess, all
16 of it, but, uh, anyway, um, I would ask you please be
17 sensitive to that [inaudible].

18 And those are really the two main things I wanted
19 to emphasize. Folks don't understand, because folks
20 just don't, that we're looking at possibly --
21 hopefully not, but possibly losing a seat, uh, in the
22 House and maybe even in the Senate in this bottom
23 state. That's not something we want. Nobody wants
24 that, uh, but there's certainly [inaudible] look out
25 for.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 19

1 I'm speaking specifically Lauderdale County and
2 Clarke and I would just urge you to keep those things
3 on your mind. I do appreciate your time. It's good to
4 see your faces again and, uh, we'll see you soon, I'm
5 sure, over [inaudible]. Thank you.

6 MR. BECKETT: Thank you for your comments. Uh,
7 Mr. Ted Gross [ph].

8 MR. DEUTCH: Good evening, Ted with [inaudible]
9 to address this [inaudible]. Uh, [inaudible] I hate to
10 pass up that opportunity for him to speak, but it's --
11 it's very appropriate that I follow, uh, Mr. Snowden,
12 because he touched two things that I have a question
13 about, perhaps a comment, but more of a question,
14 black voting age population.

15 I served as the chairman of the Lauderdale County
16 Democratic Party. Of course, we don't represent just
17 black, uh, citizens, by far, it's not just black
18 folks, but black voting [inaudible] population could
19 explain how that figures into this -- this whole
20 redistricting thing and as Mr. Snowden said, that
21 affects counting the ballots and things and -- and
22 these Mississippi [inaudible] represented strictly by
23 the government or that we have a mix of Democrats in
24 there as well.

25 That question is black voting age population. The

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 20

1 other one is is there a watchdog that monitors how you
2 stick to the guidelines that have been laid out to
3 [inaudible]?

4 MR. BECKETT: Ted, is that something that we need
5 to give a written response to?

6 MALE 4: Uh, I -- I think we could if you wanted
7 to [inaudible].

8 MR. BECKETT: Are you wanting to -- are you
9 wanting to ask his questions in general, uh -- uh,
10 about -- about who -- who would be -- who would be
11 monitoring that and -- and, uh, just --

12 MALE 4: Well, who would be -- as for monitoring,
13 the monitoring will be coming from various members of
14 the committee who serve on the committee that would be
15 responsible for bringing redistricting plans to the
16 Congress and to the House and to the Senate.

17 It would be the members of the various committees
18 of the Legislature and the voting members would be
19 voting on these matters on the floor to determine
20 whether or not we have followed the criteria that
21 we're supposed to follow.

22 And finally, if that political process is
23 insufficient, persons may, if they so choose, file
24 suit in federal court challenging our redistricting if
25 they so desire. Those would be the -- the methods for

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 21

1 oversight.

2 MR. BECKETT: All right. And I believe the first
3 part of the question dealt with delusion of minority
4 voting. And is that basically what you're con- --
5 concerned about?

6 MR. DEUTCH: Yes.

7 MR. BECKETT: All right. Um, [inaudible]
8 considered and [inaudible] districts I think that's
9 really kind of getting at the jest of the question.

10 MALE 4: Well, once again, um, the, uh, committee
11 has to abide by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Section
12 2. The voting committee also has to abide by the
13 Protection Clause of the Constitution and the
14 committee has to consider both of those factors.

15 There can be no actual ironclad answer, because
16 in every case, when you're drawing a district,
17 different considerations will come into, uh, the, uh,
18 efforts of the committee when they're making -- when
19 they're drawing a district.

20 So I can't give you a general answer except to
21 know that [inaudible] -- to know that, uh, the members
22 of the committee are well aware of these legal
23 mandates with which they ha- -- under which they have
24 to operate. Members of the staff are very familiar --
25 Mr. [inaudible] and I have been working on the

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 22

1 districting now for 20-plus years.

2 So we're quite aware of the various laws under
3 which we must operate when we're drawing the plans.

4 MR. BECKETT: All right. Thank you for your
5 thoughts. Uh, Ms. Payne.

6 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: Good evening.

7 MR. BECKETT: Thank you.

8 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: I'm Melba Clark-Payne. I am
9 currently serving as the secretary of our Meridian
10 Lauderdale County NAACP and I also served as chairman
11 of the Lauderdale County Democratic Party for seven
12 years. My question has to do with the panel. The panel
13 does not seem to represent by race, the people that
14 are in this audience or in this district.

15 So who are the people that are here, how were you
16 selected and what would be your role in the
17 redistrict?

18 MR. BECKETT: Well, I can answer some of that in
19 that we're -- it's, uh -- if you were the elections
20 chairman or vice-chairman, you were on the committee
21 in the House or the Senate, and -- and you were --
22 were diverse over the ge- -- geography of the state.

23 There are people from various Congressional
24 districts across the state, um, and as you know, there
25 are several members not here, uh, and there are 10

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 23

1 House members, there are 10 Senate members and it just
2 -- it just happens that our minority members aren't
3 here along with some of the other -- other members,
4 but the committee itself is more diverse than what --
5 what is here tonight, uh, and we can -- the committee,
6 they can provide you with an actual list of who's on
7 the committee here if you need that, but, uh -- but
8 it's not required that we have these hearings.

9 They're -- they're not required to be here, the
10 members aren't, and some choose to come to the ones
11 closer to where they live. Um, we actually have some
12 people that had other obligations. Uh, I know some --
13 some -- one person that's at another meeting and we
14 had two or three that are actually ill.

15 And so I'm not sure as to why every -- each
16 individual's reason for not being here, but the
17 committee is more diverse than the group that's here
18 [inaudible].

19 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: And what -- what would be your
20 role in the actual, uh, drawing up the lines?

21 MR. BECKETT: Yes, ma'am. The -- the Joint
22 Committee will work together. House and Senate work
23 together to draw the Congressional lines and then we
24 have two subcommittees, we have the Senate members and
25 the House members that will work on the districts in

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 24

1 their chamber. So the House members will draw -- the
2 House districts and the Senate members will draw the
3 Senate districts and --

4 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: So -- so you're saying then
5 that the fact that everybody here as white is not
6 representative of who's on the committee?

7 MR. BECKETT: No, ma'am.

8 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: And there are minorities on the
9 committee?

10 MR. BECKETT: Yes. There are five minority
11 members on the committee.

12 MALE 5: Mr. Chairman.

13 MR. BECKETT: Yeah. Yes. Yes.

14 MALE 5: I -- I was -- just so I can respond in a
15 bit more detail about the Senate membership. As -- as
16 you know, the Republicans control, with fairly large
17 majorities, both the House and the Senate. So I suppo-
18 -- suppose, at least in theory, we could have an all
19 Republican committee. That's just what happens when
20 you have charge of the -- of the Legislative process.

21 In the Senate, there are 10 members on this
22 committee, 7 are Republicans and 3 are Democrats.

23 We've got some vacancies and all. That's fairly close
24 to the percentage right down in the -- in the state
25 Senate right now. It's close enough to 70 percent

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 25

1 Republican, 30 percent Democrats.

2 So speaking as a Democrat, the Democrats from the
3 Senate have nothing to complain about, we have the
4 percentage that we would be entitled to just based --
5 if -- if you were to base things on the partisan
6 breakdown. The three members who are Democrats, I'm
7 one of them, I happen to be here.

8 Uh, Senator Derrick Simmons is from Greenville,
9 he just chose not to drive out here. He is the me- --
10 he is the member -- he is the chair of the Second
11 Democratic Caucus and then he's an African American
12 member. Senator Angela Turner-Ford who is from West
13 Point, is on this committee and she is the chair on --
14 on the Legislative Black Caucus or at least she was.
15 So that's the membership of the -- the Senate.

16 MS. CLARK-PAYNE: So what you're saying, and this
17 is my last question, it's really not a matter of the
18 representation of -- of the population, it's just who
19 controls the Senate and who controls the, um -- uh,
20 House?

21

22 MALE 5: Well -- well, ma'am, what I was trying
23 to say is looking at the partisan breakdown of the --
24 the Senate, notwithstanding the fact that the
25 Democrats and Republicans can, if they want to,

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 26

1 control the entire process. In fact, the Democrats
2 have basically prorated a number of Democrats based on
3 the number of Democrats in the Senate.

4 MALE 6: Same thing.

5 MR. BECKETT: Thank you.

6 MALE 6: Ms. Clark, um, I just wanted to -- to
7 throw in also, number one, it was a pleasure of years
8 working elections with you and Mr. Reynolds for the
9 Democratic Primary.

10 So appreciate your all's service, but also
11 remember that even though it's not up here in this
12 panel that, uh, Representative Young is a part of
13 this, uh, process too. He is on the committee. Uh, he
14 just wanted to get a front-row seat, I guess.

15 I do know that Meridian is represented both by a
16 Republican and a Democrat and I appreciate your
17 comments.

18 MR. BECKETT: Uh, okay. Um, next, Mr. -- Mr.
19 Greer [ph].

20 MR. KRILL: That'd be Krill [ph].

21 MR. BECKETT: Okay. I'm sorry, I put my -- I put
22 my glasses on after I read it.

23 MR. KRILL: First, I would like -- would like to
24 thank the committee who decided to come to East
25 Mississippi -- uh, Meridian, Mississippi and

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 27

1 basically, you know, right now currently, I'm a
2 candidate for Senate 32 that is [inaudible] by 100
3 percent of [inaudible] Jackson and I had the
4 [inaudible] representing Greg Snowden's saying, it's
5 very important that the East Mississippi delegation
6 work together, because we know that the numbers have
7 [inaudible].

8 So therefore, it's -- it's very important to East
9 Mississippi to receive their fair representation and
10 we understand that Honorable Senator Tate, I'm glad to
11 have you on the committee, that because we noticed
12 that right now even in my District 32 --

13 I was looking at the numbers, right now we're
14 looking at roughly almost 10,000 people short and we
15 just hope that the committee will be fair in looking
16 at everything, which I know that you all will, but
17 it's very important that delegation in East
18 Mississippi work together, also the mayors supervising
19 every- -- every- -- all the other elected officials,
20 work together, make sure that we receive a fair
21 representation and, uh, I look forward to sitting in
22 on a lot more of the meetings with you all sharing all
23 the [inaudible] minds with District 32, uh, here and I
24 look forward to representing 32 come January. Thanks,
25 again.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 28

1 MR. BECKETT: And thank you for your willingness
2 to serve. And, um, Mr. Charles Young.

3 MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, members of the
4 committee, welcome, again, to, uh, Meridian. It's a
5 pleasure having you all here. Um, my concerns are --
6 mostly have been expressed by those that have received
7 the, uh --

8 My concerns are specifically for this nine-county
9 area in which we're [inaudible], um, that has lost
10 population and I would also like to express that we
11 would like for the committee to consider, you know,
12 that, um, the majority of the state has lost
13 population and we realize that there are going to have
14 to be some considerations made with regard to areas
15 that have large increases in population, um, with
16 regard to the areas that have lost population.

17 But as a whole, East Mississippi is a homogenous,
18 uh, pot and we would like to remain as that homogenous
19 pot. Uh, so my simple ask is that the committee be
20 cognizant of our area and that currently we have a
21 good respectable, you know, cohesive, uh, map that is
22 drawn and is representative of our district.

23 So we would be very appreciative if the committee
24 would consider that. Thank you very much.

25 MR. BECKETT: Thank you. I appreciate that very

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 29

1 much. Uh, I have -- have one request here that -- from
2 Dr. Young that instead of him asking his question that
3 he would -- he would warrant a response and I -- I'm
4 going to read his -- the question.

5 Uh, it is, is there a correlation in the number
6 of -- of legislators and the population? And I can
7 tell you there is not.

8 Our -- our Constitution sets out the number -- I
9 guess, uh -- uh, we'll set out the number of leg- --
10 of legislative seats, and we have, and we divide that,
11 uh, where -- where the House currently is, uh,
12 representing around 24,000.

13 You know, that could be 60,000 in a district and
14 it -- it wouldn't change the number of people, you
15 just -- you just see them make them lar- -- larger or
16 smaller as far as population, but that number would
17 not automatically change because of an increase or a
18 decrease in population.

19 The other thing, Miss- -- Mississippi has a num-
20 -- has a higher number of -- of legislators than --
21 per capita than most states.

22 Uh, would that not ever decrease as the
23 population of Mississippi decreases? And -- and it
24 will not automatically -- automatically decrease. We
25 do have a large number of legislators.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 30

1 I -- I personally feel like we have too many. I
2 think Ted got a pretty good laugh, the first thing I
3 asked was does this committee have authority to reduce
4 the number, um, and the answer was no.

5 I mean, that's not something we can do. That's
6 something that the people would have to choose to do.
7 There are states that have a lot more people with a
8 lot smaller district than ours and then there are much
9 larger states that -- that have less people than we
10 have. And so, um -- but we're -- the way it's set up
11 now is we would not automatically decrease the number
12 of people because of the loss of population or
13 increase because of loss of population.

14 Uh -- uh -- uh, and -- and [inaudible], now
15 Congress does change. Yeah. Uh, I -- I -- uh, this
16 question said legislator.

17 So I -- I'm assuming our state seats, but we --
18 our Congressional seats do change based on population,
19 because there are only -- there are X number in the
20 country and that divide that population out and you
21 can -- you can gain.

22 We did not lose one this time, we have four now.
23 We've had -- uh, we had five not too terribly long
24 ago. Uh, we did lose population [inaudible]. We're a
25 unique situation that we lost population but did not

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 31

1 lose a seat and there were states that didn't lose
2 popu- -- population but lost a seat.

3 It had to do with how close they were to that
4 line and, uh, because we've lost one the last time we
5 didn't this time, but if something doesn't change 10
6 years from now, then we're going to be back on that
7 borderline again.

8 So Congressionally it does change, then our
9 number can change because of population, but
10 legislatively our number would not change. Um, are
11 there any more questions? Do you see --

12 MALE 7: One second, Chair.

13 MR. BECKETT: Okay.

14 MALE 7: [inaudible]

15 MR. BECKETT: Okay.

16 MALE 7: [inaudible]

17 MR. BECKETT: All right. All right. Uh, we have a
18 request, um, from, uh, Southern Echo, Inc. to, uh --
19 to share a toolkit of redistricting with, uh,
20 attendees at the end of the process. Um, our counsel
21 has reviewed that, they don't see a problem with that.
22 Uh, if -- uh, I'm going to let the members of the
23 committee, uh, take a look at that and -- and see how
24 they feel about it.

25 So it'll be just -- just a minute on that. Give

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 32

1 us just a second and that way if anyone else thinks of
2 a question they want to ask, uh, you all --

3 MALE 5: [inaudible] concern [inaudible],
4 including campaign [inaudible].

5 MR. BECKETT: Okay. There's --- there's no -- no
6 problem. Um -- uh, we don't -- we don't have an issue
7 with -- with that being handed out when the meeting is
8 over with. Um, it's material anybody can hand out.

9 Yes, go ahead.

10 MALE 3: I wanted to say one thing if I could, I
11 can do it from my seat.

12 MR. BECKETT: Uh, why don't you come up here so
13 we can hear you.

14 MALE 3: I would be happy to. [inaudible].

15 MR. BECKETT: Yeah. Yeah.

16 MALE 3: And I just -- uh, I just wanted to say
17 you do want to make it clear, and maybe you did, but
18 that the total number of legislators does not change -

19 MR. BECKETT: Right.

20 MALE 3: -- but with shifts in population, where
21 those legislators are do change. So Lauderdale County
22 could lose a seat, uh, Clarke County could lose -- I
23 mean, that's just the way it is.

24 So within the state, the total number stays the
25 same, but the issue is where those seats are going to

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 33

1 be from and that's really the main purpose of
2 redistricting once you all are about.

3 So I -- I just -- I -- I wanted to make sure
4 folks understand that, because with the loss of
5 population, we are potentially in the crosshairs and
6 folks need to understand that. Thank you.

7 MR. BECKETT: All right. If, uh -- if there are
8 no other comments or questions, um, one last
9 opportunity, I don't see anyone, uh, once again, I --
10 I want to thank your host for providing this space for
11 this hearing, I want to thank the public for their
12 attendance and the comments and remind the public that
13 -- that we're just in the beginning process of this.

14 This is -- this is going to take really probably
15 Mar- -- March or so. Uh, so this is -- this is
16 something that's going to be going on a while, uh; you
17 know?

18 So if you have any comments, suggestions or
19 proposed -- or proposed plans, you need to -- to -- to
20 mail those to -- to Ted Booth and once again, for
21 those watching, that is he's staff counsel -- he's Ted
22 Booth.

23 He's staff counsel Joint Reinforcement Committee,
24 it's P.O. Box 1204, Jackson, Mississippi 39215, uh, or
25 you can email it to ted.booth@peer.ms.gov.

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 34

1 And, uh, so we would love to have your comments.
2 At this time, ask any other member of the committee if
3 they've got any final comments or remarks that they
4 want to make.

5 All right. Well, uh, I thank you all for your
6 attendance. I thank -- thank each person for being
7 here and this meeting is adjourned.

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STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Page 35

1

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3 I, Chris Naaden, a transcriber, hereby declare
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10 I further declare that I have no interest in the
11 event of the action.

12 *Chris Naaden*

13 August 12, 2021

14 Chris Naaden

15

16

17

18 (Standing Joint Congressional Redistricting Committee,
19 Meridian, 8-5-21)

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STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Index: 1..applies

	24,273	8:13		23,25	12:3
1	254	6:18	7		19:9
1 4:14 6:15			7 8:14		adjourned
12:15		3	24:22		34:7
10 6:17	3	12:16	31:12,14,		advantage
14:23		13:6 24:22	16		10:12
15:12		32:10,14,	70 24:25		advised
17:25		16,20			11:15
22:25 23:1	30	17:22	8		affects
24:21 31:5		25:1	83 16:20,25		19:21
10,000 27:14	32	17:19			African
100 27:2		27:2,12,	A		25:11
12 14:21		23,24			age 19:14,
1204 11:18	39215	33:24	abide 21:11,		25
33:24			12		ahead 32:9
1890 6:19		4	acceptable		al- 8:12
1965 21:11	4	14:6	15:15		
		20:6,12	access		all's 13:18
2		21:10	10:13,16		26:10
2 12:19		5	11:14		allowing
21:12			12:4,13		4:25 8:16
2- 18:4	5	8:13,14	Act 21:11		American
20 16:25		17:25	actual 8:22,		25:11
20-plus 22:1		24:12,14	24 9:1		Angela 25:12
2000 16:4	25:22	32:3	21:15		answers
2010 6:1	56,948	8:15	23:6,20		13:17
18:5		6	add 12:18		anymore
2020 7:24	6	26:4,6	additional		15:16
2022 7:8		60,000 29:13	15:9		apologize
12:15			additionally		14:13
24,000 29:12			4:7 6:18		appears 2:17
			address		applies
			11:19,20,		15:18

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: appreciative..chamber

appreciative	B	25:14	candidate
28:23		Blackmon 3:6	27:2
area 4:16 14:20,23 15:6,10 16:2 18:9 28:9,20	back 5:24 31:6 ballots 19:21	board 17:23 bolted 7:21 book 11:13 Booth 3:2,3, 6,8,10,12, 15,17,19, 21 11:16	capita 29:21 card 10:2,3 13:14 cards 10:8
areas 9:14 15:7 28:14,16	base 25:5 based 25:4 26:2 30:18	Booth 3:2,3, 6,8,10,12, 15,17,19, 21 11:16	careful 15:10 case 8:19
arrive 12:7	basically 21:4 26:2 27:1	33:20,22	21:16
assigned 10:3	Beckett 2:1 3:4,5,22	borderline 31:7	cases 2:16
assist 9:8	assuming 30:17	bottom 18:22	Caucus 25:11,14
attendance 33:12 34:6	20:4,8 21:2,7	Box 11:18 33:24	census 6:17 7:24,25 8:22,24 9:6 12:24
attendees 31:20	22:4,7,18 23:21	breakdown 25:6,23	chair 4:3 25:10,13 31:12
attention 9:24	24:7,10,13 26:5,18,21	bring 9:23 bringing 4:22 20:15	chairman
audience 4:8 22:14	28:1,25 31:13,15, 17 32:5, 12,15,19	Brown 3:6 Bryan 3:15, 16	2:24 19:15 22:10,20 24:12 28:3
authority 30:3	33:7	bureau 7:25	chairmen 2:20
automatically 29:17,24 30:11	beginning 13:19 33:13	C	challenges 7:11 8:11 9:7
avenue 10:18	bit 14:20 16:10	call 2:24 3:2 10:4 12:17	challenging
avoid 15:4	24:15	13:24	20:24
aware 21:22 22:2	black 19:14, 17,18,25	campaign 32:4	chamber 24:1

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021
 Index: change..contact

change	Clarke	4:9 5:7	computers
29:14,17	17:23,25	10:11,21	11:14
30:15,18	18:6,12,15	11:18	con- 21:4
31:5,8,9, 10 32:18, 21	19:2 32:22 clause 21:13 clear 6:25	13:24,25 20:14 21:10,12, 14,18,22 22:20	concern 32:3 concerned 16:15 21:5
changed 7:23	32:17	23:4,5,7, 17,22	concerns
charge 24:20	close 8:20	24:6,9,11, 19,22	9:20,22 10:21 28:5,8
Charles 16:7,11 17:3 28:2	9:3,4 12:7 17:22 24:23,25	25:13 26:13,24 27:11,15	Congress
choose 20:23 23:10 30:6	31:3 closer 23:11	28:4,11, 33:23 34:2	20:16 30:15
chose 25:9	co- 13:15	28:4,11, 31:23	Congressional
Chuck 16:7 17:7	cognizant 28:20	19,23 30:3 31:23 33:23 34:2	2:7 3:1 6:16 7:4
citizen 16:24	cohesive 28:21	committee's 10:13	8:19 9:25 12:4,12 22:23
citizens 19:17	college 4:22	committees 11:9 20:17	23:23 30:18
city 16:15, 17	6:23 12:5 commencing	common 6:5	Congressional y 31:8
civil 15:18	7:1	communities 13:20	conscious
claim 13:8	comment 13:16	15:24	17:15
clarification 3:23	19:13	community 4:22	considerations 21:17 28:14
Clark 26:6	comments 13:11,13	compact 15:23	considered 21:8
Clark-payne 22:6,8 23:19 24:4,8 25:16	19:6 26:17 33:8,12,18 34:1,3 committee 2:4,25 3:1	complain 25:3 computer 10:13,15	Constitution 6:18 21:13 29:8 contact

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: contiguous.divide

11:12	cover	6:2	delivery	9:3	DEUTCH	19:8
contiguous		creation		12:6		21:6
15:24		15:1		delusion		deviation
18:12		criteria		21:3		8:14, 16, 18
continued		20:20		Democrat		difficult
17:7		crosshairs		16:8 25:2		7:20
control		33:5		26:16		dip 16:13
24:16 26:1		current		Democrat's		dispense 4:6
controls		17:9, 18		17:2		district
25:19		custom	2:15	Democratic		8:13 13:6
correlation				19:16		15:2
29:5				22:11		16:20, 25
counsel				25:11 26:9		17:19
11:17		data	8:23,	Democrats		21:16, 19
31:20			24 9:2	19:23		22:14
33:21, 23			12:6, 10	24:22		27:12, 23
counties		deadlines		25:1, 2, 6,		28:22
7:15, 25			7:3	25 26:1, 2,		29:13 30:8
8:5 14:21		deal	5:16	3		districting
counting		dealing	8:9	denial	7:1	22:1
19:21		dealt	21:3	10:14		districts
country		Debar	3:17	denying	11:8	2:8 6:16
30:20		decided		Department		7:19 8:17,
County	15:3		26:24	15:15, 16		19 9:10, 25
17:23, 25		decrease		11:2		11:2
18:6, 11,			29:18, 22,	depending		15:21, 24
13, 15			24 30:11	2:20		21:8 22:24
19:1, 15		decreases		Derrick	25:8	23:25
22:10, 11				deserves		24:2, 3
32:21, 22			29:23	15:7		diverse
couple	10:5	delays	8:23	desire	20:25	22:22
14:6		delegation		detail	24:15	23:4, 17
court	20:24		16:5 17:9	determine		divide 29:10
			27:5, 17	20:19		30:20

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: divided.geography

divided	end	9:4		flipped	
17:25		12:11,14	<u>F</u>	10:25	
document 4:1		31:20	face 7:11	floor 20:19	
draw 9:10, 24 23:23 24:1,2		entering 6:8 entire 26:1 entitled 25:4	faced 9:9 faces 19:4 facility 5:1 fact 24:5 25:24 26:1	folks 4:23 14:18 18:3,19 19:18 33:4,6	
drawing 21:16,19 22:3 23:20		equalize 7:18	follow 19:11 20:21		
drawn 16:20 28:22		essentially 9:14	factors 21:14	follow-ups 10:6 11:23	
drive 25:9		estimates 7:25 8:22	fair 27:9, 15,20	Ford 3:6,7	
<hr/>					
	E	9:6	fairly 24:16,23	forward 13:5,10	
East 14:17 26:24 27:5,8,17 28:17		Eubanks 3:6 evening 4:15 9:22 19:8 22:6	fall 7:6	14:5 27:21,24	
Echo 31:18		every- 27:19	familiar 21:24	frankly 16:17	
effort 5:16		excellent 17:8	father 16:7 federal 6:14 20:24	front-row 26:14	
efforts 2:14 4:23 7:4 21:18		exhibits 8:11	feel 30:1 31:24	full 18:2 fundamental 6:11	
elected 27:19		expect 14:13	figures 19:19	<hr/>	
elections 22:19 26:8		explain 19:19	file 20:23	G	
email 10:11 11:20,23 33:25		express 28:10	final 9:3 12:6 34:3	gain 30:21 gains 8:1,10	
emphasize 18:19		expressed 28:6	finally 20:22	ge- 22:22 general 20:9	
			fine 4:10 fire 5:25	21:20 geography	

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021
 Index: give.inaudible

22:22		history 2:4	important
give 2:15	<u>H</u>	holds 2:5	15:11
5:3, 7 9:6	ha- 21:23	homogenous	17:10
20:5 21:20	han- 11:10	28:17, 18	27:5, 8, 17
31:25	hand 32:8	Honorable	inaudible
glad 11:19	handed 32:7	27:10	4:1, 4, 11,
27:10	handle 11:11	hope 13:4	14, 18, 19,
glasses 26:22	happen 25:7	15:5 27:15	20, 21 5:1,
good 4:14	happy 32:14	Hopson 3:19	9, 12, 14,
9:6 19:3, 8	hard 15:5	Horne 16:9	21, 22 6:1,
22:6 28:21	Harkins 3:17, 18	17:7	3, 14, 20, 23
30:2	hate 19:9	host 33:10	7:8, 10, 12,
govern 11:9	hear 9:22	house 3:3	18, 19 8:6,
government 19:23	10:21 13:3	12:23 14:1	9:15, 16, 20
great 5:16	32:13	16:6 17:16	11:19, 24
14:18	heard 10:24,	18:7, 22	12:3, 20,
Greenville 25:8	25 11:1, 4	20:16	21, 24
Greer 26:19	hearing 2:9,	22:21	13:3, 5, 9,
Greg 14:9	24 5:15	23:1, 22, 25	21, 22, 25
27:4	10:20	24:1, 2, 17	14:7, 10,
Gross 19:7	13:10	25:20	14, 15, 21,
group 23:17	33:11	29:11	24 15:2, 3,
grown 15:8	hearings 2:2, 5	I	16, 17, 19,
guess 18:4,	5:17, 18,	ideal 8:12,	20, 21, 23,
15 26:14	20, 25 6:6	15	25 16:6,
29:9	14:3 23:8	identical	24, 25
guidelines 20:2	helpful 16:12	8:20	17:19, 21
	higher 29:20	ill 23:14	18:3, 5, 10,
		importance 14:18	11, 14, 17,
			24 19:5, 8,
			9, 18, 22
			20:3, 7
			21:7, 8, 21,
			25 23:18
			27:2, 3, 4,
			7, 23 28:9
			30:14, 24

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: including .lose

31:14,16	involved	kinds	10:20	25:14
32:3,4,14	15:13	Kirby	3:13,	29:10
including	ironclad		14	legislatively
32:4	21:15	Krill	26:20,	31:10
increase	issue 11:12		23	legislator
29:17	32:6,25			30:16
30:13	issues 6:9		<u>L</u>	legislators
increases	9:8 11:7	laid	20:2	4:8 29:6,
28:15		lar-	29:15	20,25 32:18,21
independent		large	9:14	Legislature
16:9 17:5	Jackson		24:16	2:6 7:7
indication	11:18		28:15	16:4 20:18
9:6	17:18 27:3		29:25	legislatures
individual	33:24	larger	29:15	4:8
14:9	January		30:9	level 4:17
individual's	12:15	Lauderdale		limit 2:18
23:16	27:24		19:1,15	limited 14:3
influence	jest 21:9		22:10,11	limits 2:19
17:21	job 17:8		32:21	
information	joint 2:4,25	laugh	30:2	lines 23:20,
11:13,22	11:9,17			23
12:9	13:25	laughter		list 23:6
input 13:20	23:21		4:11,13	listen 9:22
insufficient	33:23		14:11	live 18:3
20:23	Justice		law 15:18,	23:11
intention	15:15		21,22	local 16:5
16:21		laws	22:2	long 30:23
interest		leg-	29:9	locked 6:1
14:16	Kemper 15:3	legal	21:22	lose 14:25
15:25	kind 2:22		6:16,19	30:22,24
introduce	16:12	legislative	9:25 12:15	31:1 32:22
4:10	17:11 21:9		24:20	

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Index: losing..Miss-

losing	9:12 18:21	make	4:24 6:25 7:18	matters	21 25:6 28:3 31:22
loss	14:22		10:4	20:19	membership
	30:12,13		13:15,16	mayors	27:18 24:15
	33:4		27:20	me-	25:9 25:15
losses	8:1		29:15	measure	14:2 16:11
lost	8:5,6 14:20 28:9,12,16 30:25 31:2,4		32:17 33:3 34:4	meeting	mentor 16:11 Meridian 12:20 13:10 16:16,18, 24 22:9
lot	7:14 11:7 27:22 30:7,8		12:19 13:6 14:6 20:6, 12 21:10 24:12,14	9:20 10:14	26:15,25 28:4 message 12:25
love	5:14		25:22	34:7	methods 10:19 20:25
	34:1		26:4,6 31:12,14,	meetings	mid-august
	<u>M</u>		16 32:3,	27:22	
made	28:14		10,14,16, 20	Melba	22:8 9:2
mail	11:16 33:20		mandates	member	5:6 mind 5:3 12:17 10:22 16:3 25:10,12 19:3
main	18:18 33:1		Mangold 3:8, 9	34:2	minds 27:23
maintain	16:16 17:14		map 28:21 maps 7:12, 21,24	members	mine 16:12 2:10,11,15 4:4 5:6 minorities 9:17 10:1 24:8
maintained	17:20		Mar- 33:15	11:4,12,15	minority 12:23 15:20 21:3
majorities	24:17		March 33:15	20:13,17,	23:2 24:10
majority	15:1,2,20 28:12		material 32:8	18 21:21, 24 22:25	minute 31:25 23:1,2,3, minutes 5:8
			matter 9:23	23:1,2,3, 10,24,25	14:3,7
			25:17	24:1,2,11,	Miss- 29:19

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: Mississippi.ph

Mississippi	number	11:23	operating	Party	19:16
2:6 11:18	12:9 26:2,	13:25			22:11
14:17	3,7 29:5,	opinion		pass	19:10
19:22	8,9,14,16,	17:11		passing	10:8
26:25	20,25				
27:5,9,18	30:4,11,19	opportunity		past	9:7
28:17	31:9,10	2:12 4:13			10:24
29:19,23	32:18,24	5:4,8			
33:24	numbers 8:24	10:12		Payne	22:5
mix 19:23	9:1,11	19:10 33:9		people	2:18,
moment 13:23	27:6,13	order 3:1			21 4:15
monitoring	<hr/>				6:10,22
20:11,12,	0	21:1			8:13 10:17
13					12:1
monitors	obligations	<hr/>	P		22:13,15,
	23:12				23 23:12
20:1	occur 7:6	P.O. 11:18			27:14
months 7:8	12:15	33:24			29:14
municipalities	occurring	panel 22:12			30:6,7,9,
11:2	9:3	26:12			12
<hr/>	odd- 11:2	Parker 3:19			percent
N	odd-shaped	part 21:3			24:25 25:1
NAACP 22:10	11:3	26:12			27:3
needed 17:2,	official 9:3	partial			percentage
4,5,6	officially	16:23			24:24 25:4
nine-county	7:1	participate			person 5:10
28:8	officials	9:18,21			6:15 7:17
notable	27:19	participation			23:13 34:6
12:18	one- 7:16	4:18			personal
noticed	online 13:1	parties			4:14
27:11	open 13:13	16:17			personally
notwithstanding	operate 14:4	partisan			30:1
25:24	21:24 22:3	25:5,23			persons
num-	29:19	parts 9:11			20:23
		ph 6:23			6:23
		19:7			19:7

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: PL94-171.reasons

26:19,20	pot	28:18,	20:22	purposes
PL94-171		19	24:20	3:23
12:6	potentially		26:1,13	put 18:6
plans 20:15		33:5	31:20	26:21
22:3 33:19	pre-		33:13	
pleasure	opportunity		produced	
26:7 28:5	2:16		15:13	Q
point 6:14	precinct		product	qualified
7:2 25:13	9:10		15:14	7:3
political	precincts		projects 8:1	question
20:22	11:1		proposed	6:11 13:15
popu-	preference		33:19	19:12,13,
31:2	4:14		prorated	25 21:3,9
population	presence		26:2	22:12
7:10,13,		16:17	Protection	25:17
15,24 8:5,			21:13	29:2,4
10 9:12	present	4:2		30:16 32:2
14:20,23		8:10	proudest	questions
19:14,18,	presenting		18:4	2:12 6:3
25 25:18		8:21	provide	13:4,18
28:10,13,	pretty	18:6	11:13,19,	14:5 20:9
15,16		30:2	22 23:6	31:11 33:8
29:6,16,	primarily		providing	Quickly
18,23		15:1	33:10	12:19
30:12,13,		primary	public 2:2,	quorum 3:24
18,20,24,		26:9	5,11,15,24	
25 31:2,9	prior	18:10,	4:25 6:6	R
32:20 33:5		11	9:8,17	race 22:13
population's	priority		10:1,13,	read 3:10
7:22		16:19	16,21	26:22 29:4
portion 8:4,	problem		11:12,14,	realize
6		31:21 32:6	15 12:4,13	28:13
posed 2:19	process	6:7	13:14	
possibly		9:18 13:20	33:11,12	reason 23:16
18:20,21		15:13	purpose 33:1	reasons 10:5

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Index: receive..seat

receive	2:5	2:25	11:17	26:15	responsible
	12:10		33:23		20:15
	27:9,20		remain	9:14,15	reviewed
received		remarkable		27:4,24	31:21
	28:6		17:1	29:12	Reynolds
recognize		remarks	34:3	represents	26:8
	4:3,7			18:8,12,15	rights 10:25
recognized		remember	12:1 26:11	Republican	15:18
	14:7			16:6 17:4	21:11
recommendation		remind	5:9,	24:19 25:1	role 22:16
s	2:6		10 13:23	26:16	23:20
			33:12		
record	5:14	represent		Republicans	roll 3:2
redistributed				24:16,22	4:5
	14:24			25:25	room 8:17
redistrict			22:13	request	roughly
	2:7 6:9,	represent-		29:1	27:14
	13,15,19,	13:2		31:18	
	20 7:10			require	round 14:2
	22:17	representation	9:13 15:7	6:13,14	rules 11:8
redistricting			16:13	required	14:1
	2:3,14 3:1		17:12 18:7	6:21 7:19	running
	6:24 7:1,		25:18	23:8,9	16:21
	5,11 8:25		27:9,21	7:18	
	9:9 12:5	representative		requires	
	13:19 18:5		16:6 17:19	6:15,19	Sampson
	19:20		18:8 24:6	residents	17:18
	20:15,24		26:12	4:16	scattered
	31:19 33:2		28:22	respectable	7:21
reduce	30:3	representative		28:21	seat 14:25
reducing		s	15:9	respond	18:21
	8:23			24:14	26:14
regard		represented	16:8 17:23	response	31:1,2
	28:14,16		18:10,11	20:5 29:3	32:11,22
Reinforcement			19:22		

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: seats..subcommittees

seats	29:10	12:7,11,14	simply	10:22	splitting
	30:17,18	series	5:17	sir	3:3
	32:25	serve	20:14		4:12
secretary				sitting	13:7
	22:9				27:21
Section	6:18	served	19:15		10:8
	21:11		22:10	situation	11:17,22
segments		service			21:24
	13:19		26:10		33:21,23
selected		serving	22:9		stand
	16:4 22:16		session	4:9,13	
Senate	3:12		7:9	start	2:23
	8:15,17		29:16 30:8		12:13
	18:22		set	5:18	
	20:16		4:1 9:2		8:5,6
	22:21		29:9 30:10	Smith	15:6,8,22
	23:1,22,24				16:2 18:23
	24:2,3,15,		sets		22:22,24
	17,21,25		29:8	Shanks	24:24
	25:3,15,				28:12
	19,24 26:3		27:22	Snowden	30:17
	27:2				32:24
Senator		shifted	7:13	Southern	statements
					31:18
	18:13		shifts		2:13
	25:8,12		32:20	space	15:23
	27:10			33:10	states
Senators		short	27:14	speak	2:18,
					21 16:14
	12:23 15:9				30:7,9
	send	show	7:24		31:1
				speakers	stays
		showing	7:25		32:24
			8:3		stick
				13:23	20:2
			sign	speaking	
			5:11,		Stonewall
			12		17:24
Senior	16:8	signed	5:13		strictly
sensitive				14:2 19:1	19:22
	18:17		Simmons	25:2	
			3:19		strong
			25:8	specific	18:14
September		simple	10:23		specifically
	9:4,5		28:19		subcommittees
					23:24

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Public Hearing on 08/05/2021

Index: submit..wanted

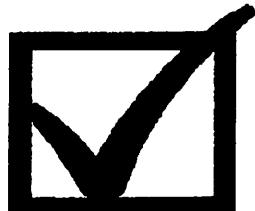
submit	10:10	tedbooth@peer. ms.gov	19:3 30:22 11:21	18:19 27:10
suggestions	2:5 10:10	telephone	34:2	33:4,6
	33:18	11:23	Tom 17:7	understanding
suit	20:24	terminals	Tommy 16:9	9:8
supervising	27:18	10:14	tonight 2:2	understood
supervisors	17:24	terribly	13:2 23:5	14:19
		30:23	toolkit	unique 14:22
		That'd 26:20	31:19	30:25
suppo-	24:17	theory	total 32:18, 24	upcoming 2:13
suppose	24:18	thing	24	urge 18:13 19:2
supposed	20:21	17:22 19:20 26:4 29:19 30:2 32:10	touch 6:4 touched 19:12	_____
		things 6:2, 4,5 10:24	town 17:24	v
T		11:4,6	traditions	vacancies
taking	10:12	12:1 15:23	17:16	24:23
talk	11:6,7	16:1,3	transcripts	vacated 13:7
talked	11:5	18:4,18	5:25	vice-chairman
talking	10:6	19:2,12,21	Troy 18:8	22:20
Tate	3:19, 20 18:14 27:10	25:5	truth 17:17	vote 6:15
Taylor	3:12	thinks 32:1	Turner-ford 3:21 25:12	voting 7:17
Ted	3:2 11:16 19:7,8 20:4 30:2 33:20,21	thoughts	type 8:16	10:25 19:14,18, 25 20:18, 19 21:4, 11,12
		22:5	_____	_____
		throw 26:7	u	_____
		time 2:19, 23 5:2,5, 22,23 7:3	U.S. 11:16 15:17	w
ted.booth@ peer.ms.gov.	33:25	11:13	understand	wanted 18:18
		12:12,13, 16 13:13, 24 14:1,3	5:20 6:7, 12 7:13 8:18 17:14	20:6 26:6, 14 32:10, 16 33:3

STANDING JOINT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
 Public Hearing on 08/05/2021 Index: wanting..Young's

wanting	written	20:5
20:8,9		
warrant	29:3	Y
watchdog	year	7:4
20:1		15:4
watching	years	6:17
10:18		9:8 14:23,
12:2,25		24 15:12
33:21		16:25
ways	9:19	17:22,24,
	18:1	25 22:1,12
		26:7 31:6
weeks	12:14,	
16	young	16:5,
		8,11 17:3,
wells	16:13	7 26:12
West	25:12	28:2,3
white	3:12	29:2
	24:5	Young's 16:7
Wiggins	3:21	
Wilkins	6:23	
willingness		
28:1		
work	17:1	
	23:22,25	
	27:6,18,20	
worked	16:10	
working	7:7	
	21:25 26:8	
works	17:8,	
15		
worry	12:8	
writing		
	10:11	

SDT-SJLCRR-000050

JTX-022-050



Southern Echo, Inc.

2021 Redistricting Toolkit

- **Public Hearing Dates**
- **Redistricting Frequently Asked Questions**
- **2020 State House Districts Map**
- **2020 State Senate Districts Map**

Prepared by:
Southern Echo Inc.
7.25.2021

SDT-SJLCRR-000051

JTX-022-051

2021 Redistricting Public Hearings in Mississippi...

On August 5, 2021, the first of nine redistricting public hearings will be held in Meridian MS. Mississippi Lawmakers have the task of redrawing four U.S. House seats and 174 state legislative seats. The public hearings will be live streamed via the MS Legislature's You Tube channel (see web address below) and individuals may also participate in person. Each public hearing meeting is scheduled to begin at 6pm.

Below is a listing of the 9 public hearing locations:

1. **Aug. 5:** Meridian, at Meridian Community College in the McCain Theater.
2. **Aug. 6:** Tupelo, Itawamba Community College Belden Center.
3. **Aug. 9:** Senatobia, Northwest Community College Haraway Center.
4. **Aug. 11:** Itta Bena, Mississippi Valley State University William A. Butts Social Science Building.
5. **Aug. 12:** Starkville, Mississippi State University Hunter Henry Center.
6. **Aug. 16:** Natchez, Alcorn State University Business School Auditorium.
7. **Aug. 18:** Gulfport, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Harrison County campus Fine Arts Auditorium.
8. **Aug. 19:** Hattiesburg, University of Southern Mississippi Joe Paul Theater in the Thad Cochran Center.
9. **Aug. 23:** Jackson, Mississippi Capitol, room 216.

www.legislature.ms.gov/webcastmenu/mississippi-legislature-youtube-channel/



Southern Echo, Inc.

Redistricting Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the redrawing of district boundary lines. Usually, when we speak about redistricting, we are referring to the redrawing of “political” district boundary lines that are used to elect our political officials. This includes congressional, legislative, and local council or commission district lines.

WHEN does redistricting occur?

Redistricting occurs directly after the decennial census. Since the delivery of the 2020 Census was delayed, the start of the redistricting process has also been delayed. The U.S. Census Bureau by August 16 is set to release in-depth demographic statistics from the 2020 Census that will be used to redraw legislative voting districts.

These follow the April 26 release of the first results from the 2020 Census, which showed that the total population was 331.4 million. The first release determined each state’s share of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. The August release will be in a “legacy” format that governments used in the 2010 and 2000 Censuses. States will use these files to begin their redistricting efforts. By September 30, the Census Bureau will make the same data available online in a more user-friendly format on data.census.gov.

WHY is redistricting important?

We perform redistricting to adhere to the one person, one vote concept that extends from the constitution. Therefore, every ten years after when the decennial census is released, we equalize the district population. The lines that are drawn may determine who gets elected. Unfairly drawn lines may lead to electing officials that enact unfair policies that do not reflect your local or regional community priorities.

Redistricting is all about equal representation and who has influence in the election of our representatives. Because redistricting can be such a powerful tool, many people in the past and present have attempted to use redistricting to entrench political power for select populations, and to exclude communities of color from electing their candidates of choice. In order for redistricting to promote equality, people who have been historically disadvantaged by the redistricting process must themselves get involved, and it is especially important for communities of color, such as Black, Latino, and Asian American communities, to be involved.

WHAT can you do to help to ensure that fair representational lines are drawn?

You can attend public hearings and express your desire to include your community in certain districts. You may also develop your own districting plan and present it to the governing body that is making the critical decisions on redistricting.

WHO can participate in the redistricting process?

Anyone who wants to participate in the redistricting process may do so. Since redistricting affects everyone who resides in the United States, it is important that parties with a stake in how districts are drawn are able to voice their opinions. Different states, however, have different mechanisms and policies regarding public participation; make sure that any redistricting map that you propose complies with those state requirements, as well as the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

HOW can I provide input on an alternative redistricting map if I don't have the financial resources, redistricting knowledge, or mapping software?

In the redistricting process, it is most important that your voice be heard. Creating alternative redistricting maps is definitely a helpful method of participation, but it is not the only method. If you do not have the resources or means to create an alternative map yourself, you have the option of working with other community members/residents or organizations in your community or state, or with national organizations that may have resources to help. Additionally, you can still provide input on maps without having to create one yourself; you can attend public hearings and provide your input on other maps that have already been created, raising the alarm if a map attempts to concentrate or split minority voters into too few or too many districts and dilutes the political influence of people of color.

You can also provide input about your community of interest and explain why it should be kept whole and not split across districts even if you do not have an alternative map to propose. Ultimately, it is the residents of a community who know that community best—so it is up to you to be an advocate for yourself and your neighborhood. By providing information about your community, you are helping to fight for a more equal redistricting plan.

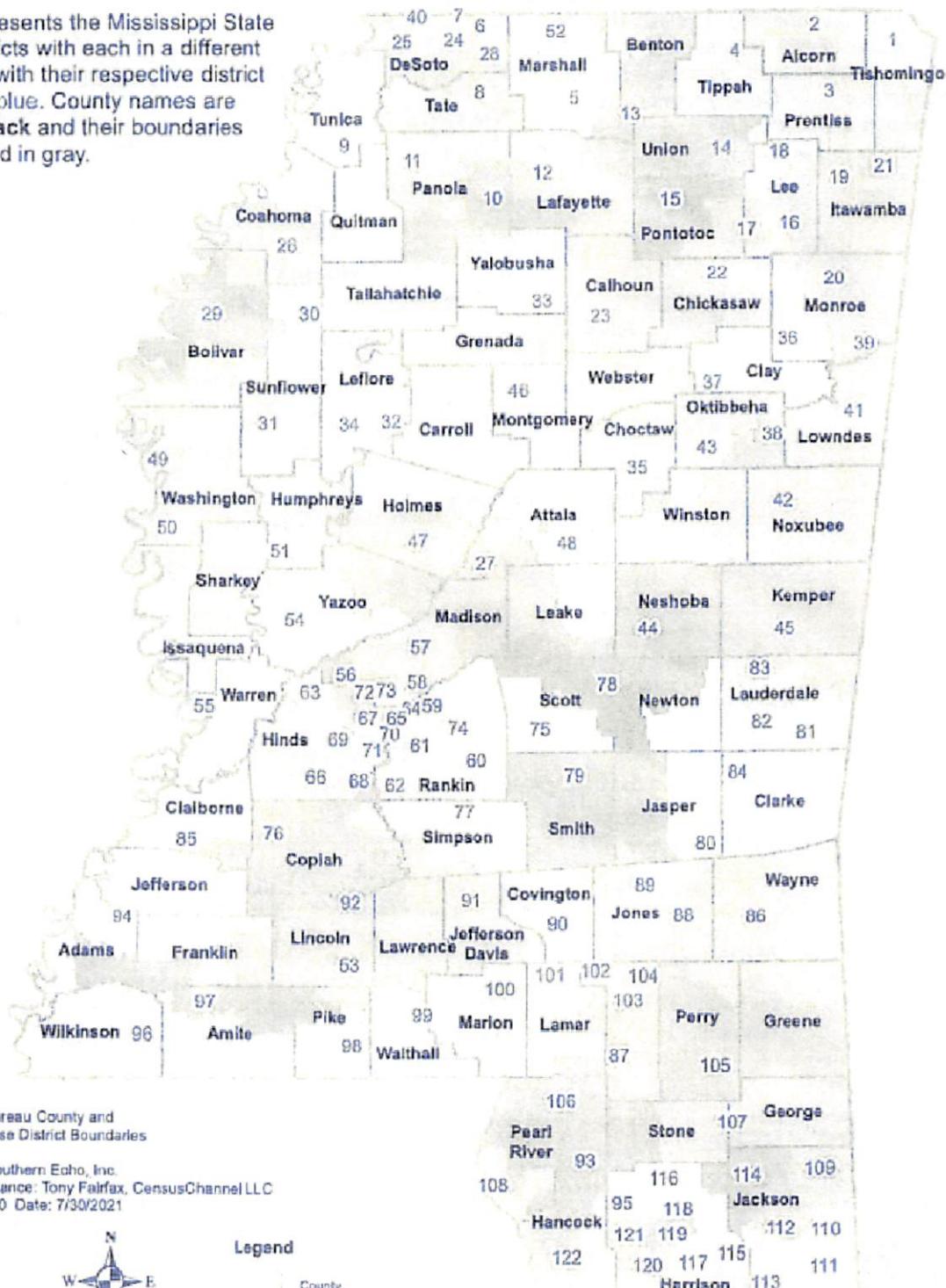
WHERE can you find more about redistricting?

Contact Southern Echo Inc. for more information on redistricting: 601-214-3601.

Mississippi Counties

2020 State House Districts

This map presents the Mississippi State House Districts with each in a different color along with their respective district numbers in blue. County names are shown in black and their boundaries are displayed in gray.



Mississippi Counties

2020 State Senate Districts

This map presents the Mississippi State Senate Districts with each in a different color along with their respective district numbers in blue. County names are shown in black and their boundaries are displayed in gray.

